

INTERVIEW

WITH

ANTONIO ORENDÁIN

Radio Station KMUL
Muleshoe, Texas,
March 17, 1974
1:15 P.M.

Symbols

- G = Bill Valdez González, Announcer, Radio Station KMUL
A = Elías Noé Anzaldúa, Announcer, Radio Station KMUL
O = Antonio Orendáin, Organizer, United Farm Workers of America

NOTE: This interview was conducted in the Spanish language. The following is a liberal translation, with certain idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms rendered in their rough English equivalents.

- G: We have with us Elías Noé Anzaldúa and Mr. Antonio Orendáin, right, and some representatives of Chicanos Unidos-Campesinos, local and state-wide. With you now, Elías Noé Anzaldúa and the persons mentioned.
- A: Very well. Thank you, Bill. It's 1:15 in the afternoon. We will be with you until 4:00. At 4:00 we leave for the Dallas, Houston, Texas, area. Tomorrow María Esquivel handles the programming on 1380, Monday and Tuesday. As had been promised yesterday by Armando Acosta--he had mentioned to us that Mr. Antonio Orendáin would be present in Muleshoe, Texas, today and to give him an opportunity to greet the public of the West Texas region. He is accompanied by some other friends--these people are all from the Valley. We'll give each of them a chance to say hello to our listening public. The microphones of Radio 1380, now, to Mr. Antonio Orendáin.
- O: Thank you very much for inviting us to be here, especially to Mr. Armando Acosta, as well as to Chicanos Unidos, as we have come for the first time--or for me it's the first time I have come here to West Texas.

And we have noticed that we have many farm workers here who sympathize with the Union, not simply of the Valley but the Union that César Chávez directs from California. For example, yours truly has worked with or has assisted César Chávez for a long time, trying to achieve union for the farm worker, first in California. There in the Valley we have tried to inform the farm workers that before going to California they think about where they are going and what it is they are going to do. Because many times they have been using these workers, much of the time they have used them to break strikes; because at times if they have a proper standard, if they pay less here in Texas, on going to California they earn a little more but they don't realize what they are doing: They are going to break a strike or a struggle which in the long run is going to result in benefit to the whole world.

Now what we also would like to clarify is that César Chávez is not saying that the farm worker must earn two or three dollars an hour. No. The only thing that we are asking is that the farm worker be recognized, the he put the price on the sweat of his work, just as, for example, the gas stations put a price on gasoline or the bakeries put a price on their bread. Because right now the farmers are saying, "No, if the Union comes in it's going to demand that I pay two, three dollars an hour, and I'm not going to be able to pay that much; better I should not plant." This is not so. We are not asking--César Chávez has never demanded that the worker be paid three or four dollars. The only thing that he seeks is that they recognize the right of the worker to sit down and negotiate a union contract or hours of work, as well as a price for the work, in the same way as any other person negotiates and puts a price on the labor he sells.

Q: Mr. Orendáin, could you mention for us in the "Magic Valley" of the Rio Grande, what success have you had in forming a union, or how many unions have succeeded in the Valley or in other places where you may have worked?

A: We always have to refer back to the movement in California, which is where we have succeeded in having contracts, as in almost 85% of the lettuce--of the grapes and 75% of the lettuce over three years. After three years we lost them, because another union came along and took away these contracts without giving the workers an opportunity to vote whether they even wanted that union or not. In the Valley we also started something similar--something similar was begun in 1966. I don't know how many people remember this there in the Valley, but thanks to the Texas Rangers and their own vociferousness, they destroyed our entire effort and they beat some of our people. We then sued the Texas Rangers--the first time in the history of the United States that anyone sued a police body as powerful as the Texas Rangers--we took them to Federal court in 1968. Three Federal judges found them guilty after three years of deliberation, after thinking three years they were guilty, and they were found guilty of police brutality and abuse and of working in favor of the farmers to break our Union.

Now what good was it that after three or four years they ruled that they had been or had abused the authority they had? Even still to this day the State of Texas put a captive before the Supreme Court in Washington--or when justice enters allegedly to help the poor worker, the worker who has no money, since justice is blind it doesn't see the worker. But on the other hand, to the rich justice is still blind, but it has very good ears; because when the sound of the dollar is heard, then it moves very rapidly in favor of the employer and very slowly in favor of the worker, since he doesn't have money.

So in the Valley, we have nothing; there is absolutely no Union contract now. We have many people who sympathize with the Union. We have picket lines, demonstrations and marches against chain stores, as for example that of HEB. Some other stores have taken us to court, they've sued us--most recently a store in Harlingen--they've sued us for two and a quarter million dollars. We're going to have to sell a lot of tamales to be able to pay them...

A: I should say!

O: Another store in Mission, Texas, sued us for a quarter-million dollars. So we now owe--we've been sued for two and one-half million dollars. Now we've discovered that that store was doing something wrong, and we have sued them for a half a million dollars, also. In other words, we're fighting fire with fire.

A: Okay. You were mentioning to me that in California other organizations or another union broke the contract. These other unions or organizations were of Mexican-Americans, or what percentage were Mexican-Americans?

O: Well let me say that the majority of farm workers are composed of, for example, some 60% or 70% Mexican-Americans. Now the reason that that other union entered as it did is that before representing ourselves-- Suppose you have 100 workers. I come to you and I say, "You know what? I'm going to represent your 100 workers." No. First I talk with your 100 workers, and if your 100 workers want me to represent them, then I come to you and I say, "Look, sir, the 100 workers that you have want me to represent them and to negotiate better working conditions and better pay." And if you do not accept this, this is when strikes must be made, something has to be done. But if you actually say, "Okay, can you prove it to me?", it is verified by authorization cards, as they are called, where each worker signs this authorization card and indicates his Social Security number. Of course I am not going to show you the signatures, but in front of an impartial judge who says, "Yes, the 100 workers are signed with the Union," then is when we negotiate a contract. This is the way César Chávez has done it. It was in this way, then, that for three years we represented all the workers in California. But after three years the employers, instead of again signing with us, this other union came directly to you and said, "Look, if you sign with me then you can use perhaps--now your lettuce will have our union's seal, or your grapes will have our union's seal, so now you will be able to sell your products in the market or they will

be sold in the store, and now there won't be any boycott. Sign with us, deduct from them their dues, deduct so much dues from the workers, and that's all you have to do." In other words they say they represent the worker without ever having asked you if you agreed to be represented or not.

A: In other words, the worker did not agree, did not know about the negotiations that were going on.

O: You just said it: the worker never knew, for example if at first they deducted from your check to pay dues to the Union of César Chávez and from one day to the next they said, "Your money is no longer going to César Chávez' union; now it's going to pay the dues of this other union."

A: That is, they automatically switched unions on the worker and changed by force, you could say...

O: They changed them completely, and it is for that reason that we are undertaking this boycott nationally, asking the people not to buy grapes or lettuce that comes from California if it is not picked under a United Farm Workers Union contract. Perhaps it would be good to clarify--for example, many people say, "Okay, but what difference does it make if the lettuce is here; you should stop them from picking it." The reason that the grapes and the lettuce are picked there in California lies in the way that they abuse the worker--for example, when 100 workers go out on strike, if they bring in another 200, perhaps from farther away or from México, who are more in need, then these people, because they are more needy...

A: They're going to work for less.

O: ...work more cheaply. Then if the worker removes these people, or if the employer gets his product out by means of illegal workers or by means of, you might say, "enslaved workers"; then putting that lettuce in the store, now neither the lettuce nor the grapes are going to be sold, so he's losing money to pay the worker, even though it may not be much, he's losing money in the transportation of his product, and later on when it doesn't sell; that's when he must come back to sit down and negotiate.

A: Orendáin, there in the Valley, there are so many people in the Valley, so many Mexican-Americans, as much as 65, 70%--even to 80, right?

O: 82%.

A: 82%. There are so many Mexican-American people, why during this time in which you have made such an effort, why haven't you been able to convince the people of all this? What is the--where is the fault, or what is it that's happening?

O: The fault, I believe, is the same question, that many of those who live there in the Valley, many think and say, "Okay, this is my home here,

or this is my homeland, but I'm going to go and work in West Texas, or I'm going to go and work up north; I'm not working here in the Valley." Or in another way, for example, right now there are thousands of workers in the Valley there, or thousands of Valley residents are planning where they are going to go, to the west or up north, because it's now very hot for the coming melon season. Then when the melons begin, they come north and the people who live in Reynosa or across the border come in to work. In other words, if you live there in the Valley, you say, "I don't work cheap because there are many dying of hunger from across the border that come over to work cheap." But when you come here to the north, here up north the same people from here say, "Those people from the Valley come here to work more cheaply, those dying of hunger from the Valley." If you go to California from here, they say, "Those people from Muleshoe, these who are dying from hunger from Muleshoe, are going to work more cheaply." Or, as it were, I as a worker, because I am afraid to fight like a man, instead I go around crying like a woman over what I have not fought for like a man; that is, putting the blame on someone else instead of seeing what the problem really is and how we are going to solve it.

A: Okay. The organization Chicanos Unidos-Campesinos is now in all parts of the region, Orendáin. How much time more or less do you think it's going to take to be able to organize the people well and to be able to explain to them so that they understand your case?

B: Look, to tell you exact numbers and figures is like telling you when all the people are going to become Catholics or Christians. Think how many thousands of years the Christian religion has been preached and still continues being preached and continues being organized so that people might become religious, so that they might remain in the Christian religion. And I am not speaking of only one religion, because look how many propagandists there are, or how many Methodists, Baptists, and all those revivals that you find everywhere. That is, so many thousands and thousands of years that religion has been preached, and still not everyone is Catholic; because if everyone were now Catholic or all--if they were all religious, there wouldn't be a need to carry on all these campaigns that are going on now. But if those campaigns have gone on for thousands of years--or 1900, to be more exact 1,974 years--this means that if the Union has just started, just imagine!

A: Correct. Your's right. Orendáin, anyway in the last few years--well, I'm speaking of the local situation here in town, what Armando, Daniel, and all of them have done here--in the last two years they have advanced substantially. Can this be seen in general or only in different sections?

B: Exactly. You are saying "have advanced". You have seen, for example, what working conditions existed four years ago and what conditions exist now. Perhaps they haven't improved much, or maybe housing conditions are the same. Wages are five or ten cents higher. But simply in the change in the attitude of the worker--for example, before perhaps we used to see an Anglo, we would remove our hat and step down from the sidewalk. In

that kind of attitude it seems to me that now we are putting ourselves on the level, because under a union contract there is a mutual respect, you see. Because if there is no union contract--I always think that you, when we say, "Our Father, give us our daily bread," an angel is not going to come to give us the bread. Yet we think that the boss is the angel who will give us the check to live on, and under a union contract, then, I no longer look up to you as if you were the angel that is sustaining us. But rather I see you as a man, a person who needs me to live and whom I need to live. For in that way--and we look at one another eye to eye, on the same level, without my going about waiting until Christmas comes along so that you'll give me a bottle or a cigar, and I'll go around saying, "How great my boss is; he gave me a good cigarette, he gave me a cigar, or he gave me a bottle!", while the rest of the year you have us living under the conditions that we have. In other words, that kind of equality that is being reached is the proof. Of what importance is seeing if what Chicanos Unidos is doing is of value, or if what we are doing in the Valley is working?

A: Changing the conversation, how have you viewed the gasoline crisis over there in the Valley?

O: There you have--that is another problem that is arising there in the Valley where many of the Federal programs, for example we say that a Federal program is like a piñata. You have noticed how with a piñata, if there are 50 little children, not all of them get something from the piñata, right? Similarly in a Federal program not everyone gets something out of the program. But at the same time, they intimidate you, because if you don't get something from that program, you are being intimidated in order to see if one of these who is in the Federal program dies so that later I might enter. Or, as it were, they are taking from you your own initiative to struggle or to demand better wages. Because the day that you don't have--that they don't pay you enough, like the day that they force you not to earn enough, you are going to have to fight for something. But while there exists one of those little piñatas, you go looking for the know-how of where you are going to get more and where you are going to continue to get it.

In the gas crisis, be it actual or a lie, what is happening is that over there it is much more critical than here. Because here I notice that, for example, you can buy gas perhaps even today or in the afternoon. There in the Valley right now they give each gasoline station somewhere between 500 and 800 gallons per day, and they sell it in three or four hours. Or, that is, from noon down. So now you go around looking to see where they're going to sell you gas, and many times they sell you, or in the majority of the gas stations, they sell you three dollars as a limit. And I was noticing that here in the north there is no such limit of three dollars.

A: Here there is no problem. Here if you bring a huge container you can put in 500 gallons; you take it away. But yes, we have--through the news

we have had accounts of what is happening in San Antonio--or, well, to the south of San Antonio--almost all that exists. In Harlingen we noticed--it wasn't long ago, too, they had a big problem with this matter. Now Orendáin, when school ends in May is when everyone, as you say, will be leaving to work, be it in Muloshoe, they'll leave for California, for Arizona. These people, what are they going to do about this crisis? Don't you have some contact with offices where information can be given to those persons: "Look, don't go there because you'll have to stop, to support yourself, or do this or that." Don't you have any program prepared now for the work season?

O: We are not--our intention is not, for example, to serve as the guardian angel to every farm worker. Because if it is true that God gives us a guardian angel to care for us all our life, many times even this very guardian angel goes to sleep on us and we go and crash into a post, right? Now it means that it would be impossible for the Union to be that kind of guardian angel for every worker. What we want is to teach the worker to teach himself to care for and respect himself, by himself. In other words, it is not true--for example right now Rep. Kika de la Graza is going around over there wanting to issue some little identification cards saying you are a migrant farm worker so that they will sell you gas wherever you go. Do you think that if there are 10, 15 cars ahead of you and you show your card, that because it was signed by Kika de la Garza they're going to attend to you before 10 or 15 people that are in front of you? That is nothing but politics so that that politician can say--or if I were to permit myself that so that my organization might say, "Look at Antonio Orendáin; what a good person he is! He has so many sheep or so many people under his care!" It is not our interest to try to be the guides when perhaps we don't even know how to guide ourselves. Our interest is to teach the individual not to believe that a Federal program, as I said earlier, or that we are going to depend on our godfather or guardian angel to take care of us if we don't even know how to take care of ourselves. As I say, the day that you have the right to put a price on your work, or that you and I work under a union contract, it won't matter if you happen to live in hell and I live in heaven; if we do the same type of work, we ought to be paid the same amount of money. And this does not exist right now, because now if you don't speak good English, or if you are a Chicano, they probably pay you less; and I am an Anglo, I'm white, so they pay me more. That kind of discrimination is eliminated automatically under a union contract, and that is our principal interest: that each person be his own guardian angel and not go around depending on a politician or some other person.

A: Much progress has been seen. We have here one of the largest meat-packing plants--Bill works with one of them, Wilson; now he's here with Missouri Beef Packers. And in years gone by, Orendáin, you will remember that for a woman to come in and work on a line in a processing unit with the men was not seen. We have here now an announcement that they are hiring, soliciting hands for Missouri Beef Packers, men and women.

O: They are doing it as a guise, or because in any event with one or two it's like before. We say that we were so happy three or four years ago--

many of the Chicano people were so happy because Nixon had opened the doors to the Chicano. Notice that he had named a lady, Ramona Bañuelos, as Treasurer. What were we going to gain by having her name, or what did we gain--who was bettered by seeing that the dollar bill or all the bills said Ramona Bañuelos? Did it serve you in some way? Did it serve me some way that her name came out in this? Or was I now going to feel naturally proud each time I looked at her name on a bill; was it going to take away my hunger? That's the thing that we should clarify, that we should not allow ourselves to be deceived, that simply by putting the name of a Chicano we should not believe that we are at the top, if we are still just as hungry and have the same need as before, or if we are worse off. For instance, Ramona has now left, better to sell tacos. I think she does more business selling tacos than signing those little papers.

Those are the questions that we should not allow to deceive us, and it is the same: What do we gain by having them let some woman work in that packing plant? Or because a woman--for example, that other tale that we should take our small children to a daycare in order to take my wife to work in the fields. That, too, is another means of deceiving us, because the day that I see some lawyer, a doctor take his children there, I'm going to take mine there because it's a good program. When have you seen the children of a lawyer, a doctor, or a policeman in a daycare? They simply aren't there, because the doctor, the lawyer, or the policeman, the professional, earns enough money like a man and can support his wife. But like a man I don't earn enough money and have to go taking my wife to help me support my family.

A: Very well. We still have the minister; he's going to speak at 2:00, is that right, at 2:00 P.M.? Orendáin, some other question that we may not have asked that we need, that you wanted to clarify or that you wanted to inform us of here in this region?

O: Well only that I would like to clarify and relate to everyone--for example, as in California, we there in the Valley have a newspaper called El Campesino. It comes out every 15 days. It's where we try to make known our points of view, because we look at each problem from a different angle of view. It's as I say, for example, the problem can be between the two of us, and I see one angle and you see another. But just because you have an education you're going to be right. This is what I want to say, that you can't be right all the time; give me, also, the chance to say, "Look, I, too, want to do this, or I, too, want to be a part of resolving a problem." Or, as it were, if we both are going to make porridge, I, too, want to stir it and not just be waiting for you to serve it to me and say, "Look, this is good for you." And that is what we are seeing in the Federal programs, or that is what we are witnessing at present, that you educate yourself, move up, and say, "I educated myself; I did it the hard way; now you have to follow me." And the only thing we become, those of us who remain below, we become like lambs that they're taking from one corral to pen up in a bigger one.

Now that is our viewpoint, that is what we want to say to the people. All of us, as creatures of God or as human beings, are able to think, and three heads think better than one. Why, then, do we have to respect or obey blindly someone who says he is the leader, when all together we can come up with better ideas? There in the Valley that is what we are doing and telling the people for example, trying to explain what the difference is between Union lettuce and lettuce that isn't from the United Farm Workers Union, the reason we are doing it, and also clarifying for everyone that, as I say, the Union is not asking that the employer pay two, three dollars an hour. But only that the employer realize that he needs us and that we need him. It is a matter of the two existing, but with a better understanding and not "I am the boss, and if you want to work on the terms I say, fine; if not, go to hell. Pretty soon someone else will come along more hungry than you, and for sure he will submit to all my whims."

That is the only dispute that exists right now at present, and not to go around laying blame, for example, on coming here to the north we put the blame, saying, "Those cheap-workers from the Valley"; those of us from the Valley say, "Those dying of hunger from México." Those from México say, "That bunch of Chicanos; they don't like to work; they like to live on food stamps; they like to live off the Federal programs. My boss says I'm a very good camel; because of that, he pays me three, four dollars. With the four dollars he pays me, I send two to México; I'm doing business." In other words, I as a worker put the blame on another and he on another, but we are not trying to determine, is it the fault of those from México, is it the fault of those from the Valley, is it the fault of those up north? How are we going to help those whose fault it is; how are we first going to get together to determine how many we are, who we are, what our problems are? Is it really the lack of education? (Portion of tape missing) ...to another who didn't go to school. Or a doctor, let's say. I can tell you about thousands of lawyers who have stolen from people who never went to school, but where has it ever happened that one lawyer steals from another lawyer--because two awls don't stick one another.

This means, then, that they are using education to continue swindling the people who didn't have the opportunity or those of us who are "ignorant" and don't understand or learn anything. But in any event, what would happen if everyone in the world went to school, if everyone got his diploma in law or medicine? I would say to you, "Listen, do you want to work the land?" You would reply to me, "No, I am a lawyer; I don't work on the land." Supposing no one worked the land. The land isn't going to produce by itself. They would like it that way. Later, the farm worker, what we are seeking is, just as they say, "I am a professional attorney" or "I am a professional businessman or a professional banker," that it be, "My profession is working in the fields, and from there God gave me my living, not to live wealthy but at least with the basic necessities that the rest of society is used to." That is what we are asking, and that they not go on telling us that because we have no education we have to send our children and that meanwhile we should be slaves and work at wages that you want, and since he has no education, I'm going to free myself and be a cheat to another who never went to school.

A: Orendáin, you are right. There are many points of view, as I say, that we are not bringing out here within the radio station. That of the farms, we don't know how it is. Bill, too, has his work. Armando has his work in the fields; but sitting down and discussing these things you become aware of a little more. In my point of view the last two or three years I have realized various things which before I didn't know, you understand. Sitting down in a --and talking one to another you realize a little more. And as Bill was saying yesterday, these local boys here have done a lot for the community, and not only here. They've now moved into Bovina and other areas in the whole region. And I believe that in the Morton area here this activity is not going on because they haven't moved in. In other parts it hasn't moved as it has here in the Muleshoe area. I think that, yes, it has improved, like now with Tienda Obrera which they are going to open, these emergency food vouchers they have, emergency medical vouchers--before and in other places they are in need of all that. In other locales, as further up there in Pampa, in Borger, in those places they say right away, "We don't know nothing about that; we don't know anything about that..."

O: Those reasons--what we say, what good is it if there is a law that says that in all of Texas they should have that kind of services? But on the other hand, in those places that you mention where nothing like that exists, it's because there is no Chicanos Unidos as there is here. That means that Chicanos Unidos cannot be, as I said earlier, the guardian angel for the whole world, nor can César Chávez be the guardian angel of the whole world. For that reason, it is essential that we all wake up, not educate ourselves; that we teach ourselves to demand and not wait for you to come help me or wait patiently for the year to come when Jesus Christ might appear and come back to save us. Because I'm sure that whatever year that Jesus Christ comes they will turn around again and crucify Him in a half-hour and things will return and continue the same.

Over there in the Valley, for example, there was a Baptist minister who was telling us a lot of things, he was attacking us a lot, and he says that we are all equal under the cross. He is right. We are all equal under the cross. But there are some ministers who climb on top of the cross and make it heavier for us to bear. The way they want it done, if indeed it is that of Caesar to Caesar and that of God to God, when a minister is allowed to tell us that we ought to be good to save our soul, but at the same time he tells us to be humble under the laws of man because we are going to get our reward afterwards in heaven, then they are not regarding us other than that we live lean, dying of hunger here, and when we die someone is going to put a pair of wings on our ribs.

These are the questions that we should clarify, that it is better to die with something in our stomach, but that it be something obtained by the sweat of our brow, as the Bible itself says, to earn our bread by the sweat of our brow, and not earn our bread by the sweat of another, which is the way the employers do it.

A: Okay. Bill, do you have a question for Mr. Orendáin?

G: No, I just wanted to congratulate Mr. Orendáin. Unfortunately, Mr. Orendáin, we here are only announcers, and we have to abstain from comments like that which you just finished making, let's say, that the people realize what is occurring between the worker and the employer. Unfortunately I have the same ideas, or fortunately I have the same ideas as yours, since I also am a representative of the butchers' union over there in the city of Hereford, Texas. But as I mentioned to you before, I also have to abstain from making comments of that nature, since it does not suit me due to the fact that I cannot make a comment of this kind principally because my work does not permit it. But provided that I can be of some moral help to your project, to the work you are undertaking, fine, I am at your service--provided that violence is not used, because when the punches begin, Bill González runs!

Mr. Orendáin, it's been a pleasure for us to have you here, and one more time I repeat: You have stated some things which for a long time were very necessary here in this region, and for the same reason, because of my work, I had to refrain from saying them. But you have said them for me, and for that I express to you my most sincere congratulations. The microphones once again to you.

A: Very fine, Bill. Thank you. We are on the same point, working in radio. Mr. Orendáin, you know that one also has to--we have our rules, our means. And of course I have been here 15 years with the help of our public, and all of us have made this program--we started with a little program of 30 minutes. Now we have a program of eight hours on Sundays. We have a four-hour program every day, which is almost the only radio station--with the exception of the station in Lubbock, Texas, which is all day or "full-time", as they say, in Spanish. Outside of that in the whole region our station here has donated public services of all types, it doesn't matter what it might be--everything. They ask us for information, they ask us for time, we give it to them. For that reason the program has been enlarged. As Bill just finished saying, many times I work with my boss, we have many businessmen with whom we must live every day. Maybe they agree with the organization; maybe they don't agree with the organization. We have to live with them. We can't favor them, we can't oppose them. We have to remain on a fair scale. But we have always loaned the microphones to the persons who have come with you here lately--Armando, Daniel, Brian; those who have wanted to make use of our radio station have done it without any cost.

O: Perhaps that is one of the main things, as you say, that we have been doing, that we can prove. And thanks, for example, to the way in which it is being expressed and the manner in which you are helping, you don't have to tell them one hundred percent "We are with you", but opening the door as you are doing now. 10 or 15 years ago, for example, when you began, could you have done what you are doing now at present? This means, then, that we have progressed somewhat, or that times are changing; we're doing something now at least.

The worker--or thanks to the very democracy that exists in this country, we can shout, although maybe we are not going to remedy anything by shouting; but, yes, we can cry out our needs. So it is that we always have that advantage, right? And that is what we are--well, that we can be grateful, not for any individual, but for the system under which we live, which is not one hundred percent correct, perhaps it may not be perfect--there is nothing perfect in this world--but, yes, it's a bit better than other systems of government. Therefore we can progress or we can shout, and each year it is improving, because each year we see more, or we are opening more doors to help reach our people better.

We are going to be, or I am going to be there in the office of Chicanos Unidos here in Muleshoe from 3:00 P.M. to continue conversing with these persons who wish to attend there. So we invite the entire listening audience who heard us, if they would like, to go and talk with yours truly, Antonio Orendáin, the other companions who come from San Juan, Texas, to meet us, as I said before, to meet us, to see who we are, how many we are, and what it is that we can do; "to measure our strength before trying to move mountains." So we will be there at 3:00 P.M., we are going to talk, and again I want to thank you, because there really aren't many stations like this one. There are not many stations like...

A: There are very, very few.

B: So the day--perhaps 10 years from now you may be able to say, "We were one of the first stations that began to open up the conversation or to express the viewpoint of these few farm workers."

A: In other words, Orendáin, we were, as you saw when you arrived, the boss was drinking coffee in the other room; he went out. Don't think that--I don't know if you might have seen him or not, but he is a good person, a fine man. It's just that I don't believe he had met you; he went outside. But what I want to mention to you is that I don't have to tell the boss, "Listen, Gil. Orendáin is going to come here. Will you give him a chance to talk or not? How does it look to you? I don't want to have problems with you." Orendáin arrived here boom, boom. He arrived...

B: In the Valley we have a 15-minute radio program where we have to pay \$23. We have to submit the program taped...

A: Let's see, Bill, figure it out; how many minutes has Orendáin taken now?!

B: We have to submit the program three days in advance so that they can censor it. They have suspended us, in three years they suspended two of our programs; we accused them in Washington, everything. But that's the type of time that we have. At times he says, "I'm going to translate some of this, and if it's very controversial, you can't say it." Until you scare them with lawyers, until you threaten to take them to court, that's when they say, "Okay, then, let me talk about it again." Pretty

soon they say, "No, well, it's going to come out after all." Those are the things that we are putting up with. Or as I say, 10 years from now you will have the pride to say, "We started it and we are going to continue doing it." Because 10 years from now there is going to be more freedom than exists now.

A: Orendáin, at times we have comments and naturally, working in our medium like here at the radio station, we have a percentage of people who go against us. We have a percentage. You have to have enemies. It's the same way in your work. There are persons who are going to attack you by any means. It's the same with us also. Only now I have given up. I have given up. I have to do my work as it is, and we aren't going to-- as they say, I'm not a little gold coin to suit everybody. We can't. It's impossible. There are people who say, "Well, Bill is more handsome, is thinner; you're too fat; we don't want you there; this and that." "Bill should go, he's this, he's no good, he shouts too much. Why do you employ him there?" And then, "No, we don't want Noé; we want Bill." But it's as I say: if we're going to do that, then we're never going to--There are people who call me--I have a son who went into the service-- "Why don't you put Roy in there; take Bill out." And in that manner we can't give them--we can't please the entire public.

So if I want to remain here, I have to be firm and sit down and put up with the knocks that come from all sides. The only thing is, when we have to say something to the public we say it. Yesterday we were talking, Orendáin, or the day before yesterday, and Bill can recount to you what they listened to. Our boss here is one person who gives you more time free, whatever you want. We don't know who it was, but they stole from us a rug that we had just bought from the Chamber of Commerce. It says "Welcome to Muleshoe", with a very beautiful muleshoe on it. It cost \$35. We didn't have it here two days when they stole it from us. And we don't know who it was, Chicano, black, colored; we don't know who it was, but whoever did it did something very, very bad. Because the radio station, Orendáin, anyone can tell you: something happens, we here have--we ourselves haven't paid, but with the cooperation of the public when so-and-so died as a result of an accident and there was no way to pay the bills, we talk with the funeral home, we find out about it, and we give it a go. We won't mention names or amounts, but we have paid for many funerals. To the hospital--we can't because the hospital is impossible. There are times when for a half-hour they want to charge a world of money; but the people help us, and we help the people. And later I begin to think, "But who did such a thing as to carry off a rug?" Well, what good is it to him? The radio station--just don't be crude! Bring back the rug.

Are there some other gentlemen, Orendáin, who are with you who have some other point or who may want to use the microphones to greet the public, or perhaps they have some relatives... Where are you from, gentlemen?

D: I'm from McAllen.

- A: From what part of McAllen? From what sector of McAllen? 17th Street, or where.
- D: South 23rd Street.
- A: South 23rd Street. There where Andy Motor Company is.
- D: In the barrio of...
- A: Where Andy Motor Company is. Mr. Manuel González sells cars there. I have a relative there; he served on the school board: Andy Anzaldúa in McAllen. And then we have a cousin; he's with Alamo American Finance: Baldemar Roquín. And another cousin, Saldaña's Loan Company there in McAllen. So maybe you could tell them hello for me if you see them.

Your name, sir?

R: Claudio Ramírez.

A: From what area, Mr. Ramírez?

R: From Pharr.

A: From Pharr, Texas. Very good. Would you like to use the microphone-- something that we may have missed, either I or Orendáin? I think Orendáin covered all the--From here where do you go, Orendáin?

O: Well, tomorrow we will return again to the Valley, and just to remind you, for example, that our offices are on Highway 83, one mile east of San Juan, Texas, where Morningside Road crosses Highway 83. That's where our office is and that of El Campesino. As well as to remind the people again that at 3:00 P.M. we will still be here talking with the people who wish to listen and exchange points of view. That we need--or let's believe in being in agreement to see if it is possible to do something, and the grape and lettuce boycott, which is also very, very important. Perhaps not for the workers of Texas but for all those workers who are going to California who already know what a Union contract is, then they already know what we can do to succeed.

A: Orendáin, how does the little town of Muleshoe look to you, without holding anything back?

O: Well, it's very pretty. It is a typical town. As it is the first time I have come to West Texas, just now we were recalling that it looks like the valley of Bakersfield and around there; Lamont. I remember also that the only thing that it lacks here are the grapes, and that there aren't bottled goods, either--we don't know why!

A: Very well. So Mr. Orendáin will be in the offices of Chicanos Unidos-Campesinos this afternoon from 3:00 P.M. on. Armando, the luncheon is over

or still going? It's over. Very good. So we enjoyed having--It seems that Armando--You mentioned to us yesterday, Armando, that Mr. Orendáin had been national treasurer of the...

A: National Treasurer of César Chávez' organization. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the National Union of César Chávez.

A: That's a very high position. It gives us great pleasure to have a person of this type with us here. We have had other persons, like this young man Muñiz was with us here last year. And then this other young man was here--what is his name? I forgot the name, but Ángel González had talked with us, to start in on the González; he's in Crystal City. He's school superintendent; he's from our town of Mercedes. Good man. So what else, Bill? Have anything that we may have missed?

G: Listen, wasn't it Ángel González who wrote that song "Sin Fortuna"? It seems to me that it was he, if he is involved with this matter of La Raza Unida--Chicanos Unidos. It seems to me it was, because the melody says something about that, that he was born without wealth. But now he finds himself in a very elevated economic state, and he simply doesn't like the way the rich treat him. It's pure hypocrisy, as he says in the lyrics of his song, and he prefers the poor people.

A: Whose lyrics are they, Bill?

G: My cousin's, Ángel González!

A: Ángel González, and sung by Gerardo?

G: Gerardo Reyes. Exactly. On Columbia Records. Yes. Exactly.

A: Very pretty. Very, very pretty. Put it on the turntable so that you can dedicate it especially to Mr. Orendáin and his friends who surround us here this afternoon.

Orendáin, we hope that you leave with a good opinion of us for the reason that we are ready at all times, at all times to receive--It's as I just finished mentioning, our boss here says to me, "Noé, the program is yours." If I have done things wrong, afterwards he tells me, "Look, Noé, there was this, or this, there, here..." But it has never come to that point. We have had persons who have said, "Man, but Noé doesn't want to give me this, or hasn't wanted to do this for me." Many times it's impossible, because they beg, they demand, they really want to wring our neck. And it can't be done. And we tell them, "You know what? We can't, for this manner, because you come very demanding, you want to tell us how to run the program, and it can't be done." We know how we should run it, and we think that we are doing a good job. But at the same time we accept opinions from the public. Because there have been people who call us, saying, "Noé, that music--Chole's sold the cow now--change it!" Yes, maybe you don't like it, but someone else does. How are we going to do it? So we have to get--and we are ready if some person thinks that our

program is not functioning as it should be, call us and tell us what we have done and we will appreciate it. Because it's as I say, I can't please the entire public; Bill can't do it, either, my boy, nor María. But we try whatever's possible to do it.

Armando, some...

O: I just want to say, then, to all the listeners, that you take care of this program. Because if you are not careful with it, you will never know what you're going to lose until you are unable to remedy it. So if right now, for example, you are succeeding, if you are doing--or for me to be able to come and say everything that I have said here, if I were to do it on all the stations in the United States, there are many of them; I don't believe there are any like it.

A: What do you think, Bill?!

O: So if the people here don't know how to evaluate what they have, some day they're going to say, or they're going to know, if they end up losing it; then they will know what they've lost.

G: Mr. Orendáin, you don't know how much good your words do us. Many of the people who listen to us daily, we mention that not all radio stations give sufficient time for this class of commentary, and many of these people criticize us and tell us that we are bathing ourselves in purity. And I want you to know that your words do me good, since I am one of the principal commentators who make this type of comments here. Noé also comments the same as I do, and we appreciate it very much because the people who listen to us who had some doubt about what we say realize exactly that it's the complete truth, that not all radio stations provide the public service that Radio KMUL lends its listening public.

O: Believe me that I have experience speaking on stations in California, when I was in the boycott there in Chicago, Illinois, in Oregon--I have been in Oregon and in many other places, and in Texas, in various counties in the state of Texas. So I am not talking of five years, but rather I have known César Chávez and worked with César Chávez from 1950 to this day. So I know what I'm telling you, and I know the way radio time has progressed in our favor. But at the same time, I am now coming to know that in Muleshoe it looks as if you are going forward, not a lot, but a little.

A: Very good, Mr. Orendáin. As Bill said, we are very pleased, very pleased by the words you have just spoken, that the public take care of us. You are the first person to give us that protection. That they care for us, that they not be crude. Yes, because if you take care of us, we'll go forward. Very well. Orendáin, we could be talking all afternoon, but it looks like we have the minister who is going to preach at 2:00. One other thing: we are the only station, the only station that is giving free time to seven ministers. Free. Free. No one else does it, only we here. and then they steal the rug from the boss. How crude! Well, friends, the gentlemen are leaving. It's 2:00 P.M. The program begins--and Orendáin,

thanks a lot, and we are at your service; and mention to the other stations that here we're not like San Camilo. We're all right. Put on the piece for Orendáin to hear, please.

G: Okay. Mr. Orendáin is leaving. We feel bad to bid farewell to him, but the program must follow its course. Mr. Orendáin, I just recommend that you continue to the present being sincere with the people, imparting to them what you are propagating. It is a recommendation that I am personally going to make to you, because I don't want you and this organization, who have done so much good for the community not only here in Muleshoe and in this whole region but also in California, in the Valley, everywhere-- my recommendation that you don't go and do as some other organizations that have been launched allegedly to help the public, and the only ones that are going to benefit, or that come out benefitting, are the representatives themselves, as has occurred before. Very well, and if the shoe fits wear it. This is Bill González at your service. And here is your song, Mr. Orendáin. (They play the song)

There you heard my favorite melody. With Gerardo Reyes, "Sin Fortuna", recorded by Columbia Records. An inspiration of Ángel González. He had to be a González, the guy!